

Tinubu orders offensive as fresh Plateau attack leaves 51 dead

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| Stephen Angbulu and James Abraham

| President Bola Tinubu

President Bola Tinubu has strongly condemned the violence in Plateau State, urging the state's leadership to find a lasting solution to persistent communal conflicts.

This comes after at least 51 people were again killed by gunmen with scores injured in the early hours of Monday in the Zikke and Kakpa communities in Bassa Local Government Area of the North Central state, two weeks after deadly clashes in another part of the state left several people dead.

Last week, the National Emergency Agency said gunmen had killed at least 52 people and displaced nearly 2,000 others over several days of attacks in Plateau, which has had a history of violence between farmers and cattle herders.

On Monday, residents said 51 bodies had been recovered in the Zikke and Kimakpa villages in Plateau's Bassa district, while several more were reportedly injured.

The cause of the attack was not immediately known.

“We cannot allow this devastation and the tit-for-tat attacks to continue. Enough is enough,” Tinubu said in a statement signed Monday by his Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga.

The statement is titled ‘President Tinubu condemns latest attack in Plateau, charges Governor Mutfwang to resolve underlying communal issues.’

Tinubu expressed profound sorrow over the bloodshed and extended his condolences to Governor Caleb Mutfwang, the state government, and the people of Plateau.

The President argued that “The ongoing violence between communities in Plateau State, rooted in misunderstandings between different ethnic and religious groups, must cease.”

Therefore, he called on the governor to demonstrate political resolve in addressing the underlying communal issues fueling the violence and establishing enduring peace.

“Beyond dealing with the criminal elements of these incessant killings, the political leadership in Plateau State, led by Governor Caleb Mutfwang, must address the root cause of this age-long problem.

“These problems have been with us for more than two decades. We can no longer ignore the underlying issues.

“It is time to tackle them fairly and find a lasting solution. I have discussed these problems with the governor over time and offered suggestions for lasting peace,” Tinubu asserted.

He emphasised the importance of fostering unity and harmony across ethnic and religious lines.

Tinubu also appealed to community, spiritual, and political leaders both within and outside Plateau State to work together to halt the cycle of retaliatory attacks devastating affected communities.

He said, “I have instructed security agencies to thoroughly investigate this crisis and identify those responsible for orchestrating these violent acts.”

President Tinubu reiterated the Federal Government’s commitment to supporting the Plateau State government in fostering dialogue, social cohesion, and accountability, crucial steps towards permanently resolving the conflict.

“The Federal Government remains committed to supporting Governor Mutfwang and the Plateau State government in promoting dialogue, fostering social cohesion, and ensuring accountability—crucial steps towards permanently resolving the conflict in Plateau,” he concluded.

Meanwhile, a youth leader in the community, Joseph Chudu, confirmed the attack, which began around 12am Monday to The PUNCH in Jos.

Chudu said that the gunmen invaded the community in large numbers shooting and burning their houses.

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Chudu said, “The attack lasted for more than one hour. Many who sustained injuries have been evacuated to the Jos University Teaching Hospital .Please, we need blood for the injured.”

Amnesty International Nigeria said the gunmen also razed and looted homes.

“The inexcusable security lapses that enabled this horrific attack, two weeks after the killing of 52 people, must be investigated,” Amnesty said in a statement.

Plateau is one of several ethnically and religiously diverse hinterland states known as Nigeria’s Middle Belt, where inter-communal conflict has claimed hundreds of lives in recent years.

The violence is often painted as ethno-religious conflict between Muslim herders and mainly Christian farmers. But climate change and the reduction of grazing land through agricultural expansion are also major factors.

Youths condemn killings

Meanwhile, the Berom Youth Moulders Association called on the Federal Government to declare Fulani militants a terrorist organisation, citing the persistent attacks on Plateau communities.

The group condemned the killings in Hurti, Bokkos, and Irigwe Kimakpa, as well as Monday’s attack on Zikke and Kakpa villages in Bassa Local Government Area, which claimed over 50 lives.

In a statement issued in Jos on Monday and jointly signed by its National President, Solomon Mwantiri, and General Secretary, Bature Adazaram, the BYM stated, “The BYM is saddened by the systemic premeditated killings of unsuspecting residents of Bokkos and Bassa, especially another round of bloodbath witnessed last night, 12th April, 2025 that claimed no fewer than 50 innocent villagers, including women and children in Bassa LGA without any just cause known to the armless populace.

“According to information available to us, the armed Fulani militants, who attacked Kimakpa and Zike villages of Kwall in Irigwe Chieftdom last night, at about 8pm of Sunday was carried out while Plateau State is yet to recover from the genocide meted out on villages of Hurti community, Bokkos LGA on the 2nd April, 2025 which is unarguably an act of terrorism that confirms a virally circulated video credited to the terror actors, who vowed to make the security situation unbearable in the state.

The group also called for legislation allowing Nigerians to acquire arms for self-defence.

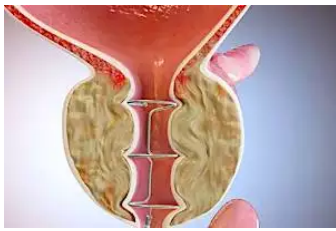
Soldiers rescue passengers

Troops of the 3 Division, Nigerian Army, and Operation Safe Haven in Plateau State have rescued 16 passengers who were kidnapped along the Jos-Mangu road.

It was learnt that the rescue operation was initiated on Sunday night, around 9pm, after troops discovered an abandoned vehicle at Mararaban Kantoma in Mangu Local Government Area of the state.

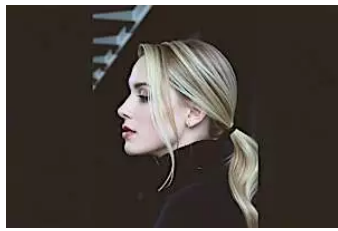
The spokesman for the Operation Safe Haven, Major Samson Zhakom who confirmed the development in a statement on Monday said upon discovering the abandoned vehicle, troops immediately searched the nearby bushes and found the kidnappers holding the passengers captive.

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According to him the kidnappers opened fire but were overwhelmed by the troops' superior firepower, forcing them to flee while the kidnapped victims were successfully rescued

The statement read, "Troops of 3 Division Nigerian Army and Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) have rescued 16 passengers kidnapped along Jos-Mangu road in Plateau State. The rescue operation began when troops conducting Operation LAFIYAN JAMA'A discovered an empty vehicle abandoned by the roadside at Mararaban Kantoma in Mangu Local Government Area of the state at about 9pm local time on 13 April 2025.

"The troops immediately searched the nearby bushes to trace the occupants of the vehicle suspected to have been kidnapped. The kidnappers, on sighting the troops opened fire, but our troops overwhelmed the criminals with superior firepower forcing them to abandon the victims and flee. Troops exploited the general area and rescued all 16 abducted passengers, which included six children.

"Troops administered first aid to some of the rescued victims who sustained minor injuries during the incident. Thereafter, troops escorted the victims to safety to continue their journey to Jos metropolis. Meanwhile, troops are on the lookout for the fleeing kidnappers suspected to have sustained gunshot wounds during the encounter.